Chapter 14

The Metal Finds and their Implications

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14.1. Introduction

The metalwork from Quoygrew is mostly of iron (530 finds), with much smaller assemblages of copper alloy (33 finds) and lead (2 finds). In addition, five late medieval and post-medieval coins were found during the excavation. The largest category of copper-alloy objects — sheet metal from vessels — is informative as it probably indicates long-range exchange. Most of this chapter, however, focuses on the more abundant iron objects. The metal finds are summarized in Tables 14.1 (iron) and 14.2 (copper alloy and lead). The complete catalogues can be found in Appendices 12.1 and 14.1.[13]

Local iron production in Orkney (from bog ore) is likely — and local smithing a rural necessity — so much of the iron is likely to indicate local networks of supply. Perhaps surprisingly, however, some of the iron objects are probably imports (based on the presence of an oak handle and of distinctive plated mounts). It is not realistic to suggest a source for these prosaic objects, but urban centres in Norway, England or the Irish Sea region are likely candidates. Thus the iron, like most other categories of finds from the site, implies the existence of both small-scale and long-range networks of communication and trade. Although superficially an unrewarding category of material culture — poorly preserved and often identified only from x-ray — the iron from Quoygrew is also informative regarding the function of the settlement, and the character of the buildings.

Of the 530 iron finds many (including tiny finds from sieved sediment samples) were very fragmentary. Consequently, 248 remain unidentified. The identified objects are discussed in detail below, with the exception of a few modern finds from poorly stratified contexts. There is no clear spatial patterning in the distribution of object types between Area G in the Farm Mound and the interventions of Areas A to F and J near the shore. Thus the finds are summarized by phase in Table 14.1. There are, however, some interesting spatial associations at a finer scale which help inform the function of both features and objects. These will be considered in the discussion below after the finds themselves have been described. Objects associated with craft activities are discussed first, followed by structural ironwork and fittings, accessories, horse equipment, and miscellaneous objects.

14.2. The iron

14.2.1. Woodworking tool

Find 61778 (from a Phase 4 to 5 context of Room 3) is incomplete, but may be part of a spoon bit, which would have been used to bore or enlarge holes in wood (Fig. 14.1). The form of these tools in the medieval period had scarcely changed from those used by the Romans (Manning 1985, 25–7, pl.12; Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2726–7, figs.1335, 1337), typically having a flattened lanceolate tang, shaft of rectangular or circular section and scooped tip. Find 61778 retains part of the shaft and tang, but the tip has been broken off.

14.2.2. Possible metalworking tools

Both Sfs. 61153 (from Phase 4.5 of Room 1) and 6366 (from a topsoil context over Room 1) are incomplete, but may be fragments of tools. Both appear to have one bevelled end, such as might be found on a metalworking punch.

14.2.3. Needles

Two needles (Sf. 60363, from an unphased layer of Room 2, and Sf. 61016, from a Phase 5 to 6 layer of Room 3) and a third possible needle (Sf. 4257, from a

13. The cataloguing, identification and description of the finds was done by Nicola Rogers (iron), Colleen Batey (copper alloy and lead) and Nick Holmes (coins). The four authors are responsible for the text.

Table 14.1. *Iron finds from Quoygrew by phase.*

Find	Phase										Unphased	Total
	1	2	2–3	3	3–4	4	4–5	5–6	6	7		
Buckle						1	1					**2**
Clench bolt			1			5		1	1			**8**
Cutlery handle								1		1		**2**
Ferrule						1						**1**
Fish hook		1										**1**
Fitting		1				1						**2**
Hinge pivot?							1					**1**
Horseshoe (medieval)										1		**1**
Horseshoe (post-medieval)									1	3		**4**
Knife	1	4	4	1		7		1				**18**
Knife?			1									**1**
Mount	1		1			1						**3**
Nail	7	3	19	7	1	30	21	11	31	24	3	**157**
Nail or stud						3				1	1	**5**
Needle					1			1			1	**3**
Rove			1	2		4	1	2				**10**
Sickle?				1								**1**
Tack						1						**1**
Other objects	3		2	2		6	3	5	24	13	3	**61**
Fragments	33	10	49	12	2	45	18	6	39	17	17	**248**
Total	**45**	**19**	**78**	**25**	**4**	**105**	**45**	**28**	**96**	**60**	**25**	**530**

Phase 3 to 4 fill in the entrance to Room 3) were found on the site. Both Sfs. 60363 and 61016 have elongated oval eyes, which have probably been formed by splitting the end of the shaft, splaying out the bifurcated ends and then re-joining them with a weld (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2739) (Fig. 14.1). With a diameter of 3 mm and incomplete length of 76.5 mm, the large gauge of Sf. 61016 suggests that it may have been used with wool thread on woollen fabric, while the more slender Sf. 60363 would have been used on finer fabric (Walton Rogers 1997, 1785). No eye survives on Sf. 4257, which could have been a needle, or perhaps a pin.

14.2.4. Sickle?

Find 62170 represents a possible sickle — used to cut cereal crops — found in a Phase 3.2 layer of Room 3 (Fig. 14.1). Most of the tang has broken off, but the gently curved blade survives, apart from the extreme tip. Traces of mineral-preserved textile which were found on the tang at the join of the handle to the blade suggest some fabric had been used to wedge the tang into the handle socket. Medieval sickles rarely survive in complete form, but several examples have been found elsewhere in Britain (Goodall 2011, 81–2).

14.2.5. Fish hook

Only one certain fish hook has been identified in the assemblage. It is Sf. 62231 which came from a Phase 2.3 floor layer in House 5 (Fig. 14.1). The hook tip is pointed rather than barbed, and at the other end is a looped eye terminal. This find resembles other hooks from similarly dated deposits in York (Ottaway 1992, 600–601, fig. 248), and Yarmouth, Norfolk (Rogerson 1976, 166, fig .53). Fragments of at least two hooks were also found at Jarlshof, Shetland (Hamilton 1956, 153, no. 77, pl. XXXIII). Examples from Norway have also been recorded (Olsen 2004, 23–6). This hook would have been used to catch large fish, such as cod (Rogers 1993, 1319), which dominate the fish-bone assemblage from Quoygrew (Chapter 7).

14.2.6. Knives

Knives form one of the largest elements of the assemblage of iron artefacts, with 23 knives or probable knife fragments being recovered across the site. A small selection is illustrated in Figure 14.2. Many of the knives are fragmentary, and the original form can be ascertained in only five examples. All of these are whittle tang knives, with a solid tapering tang which would have been socketed into a handle. The other knife form has a scale tang, in which the tang was riveted to two handle plates, one on each side. Whittle tang knives have been recovered from sites of the Roman period onwards, but scale tang knives were not in use in Britain before the thirteenth century (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2751).

The most complete whittle tang knives from medieval deposits have been classified according to the typology created by Ottaway (1992, 559–61) in his study of Anglo-Scandinavian knives from 16–22

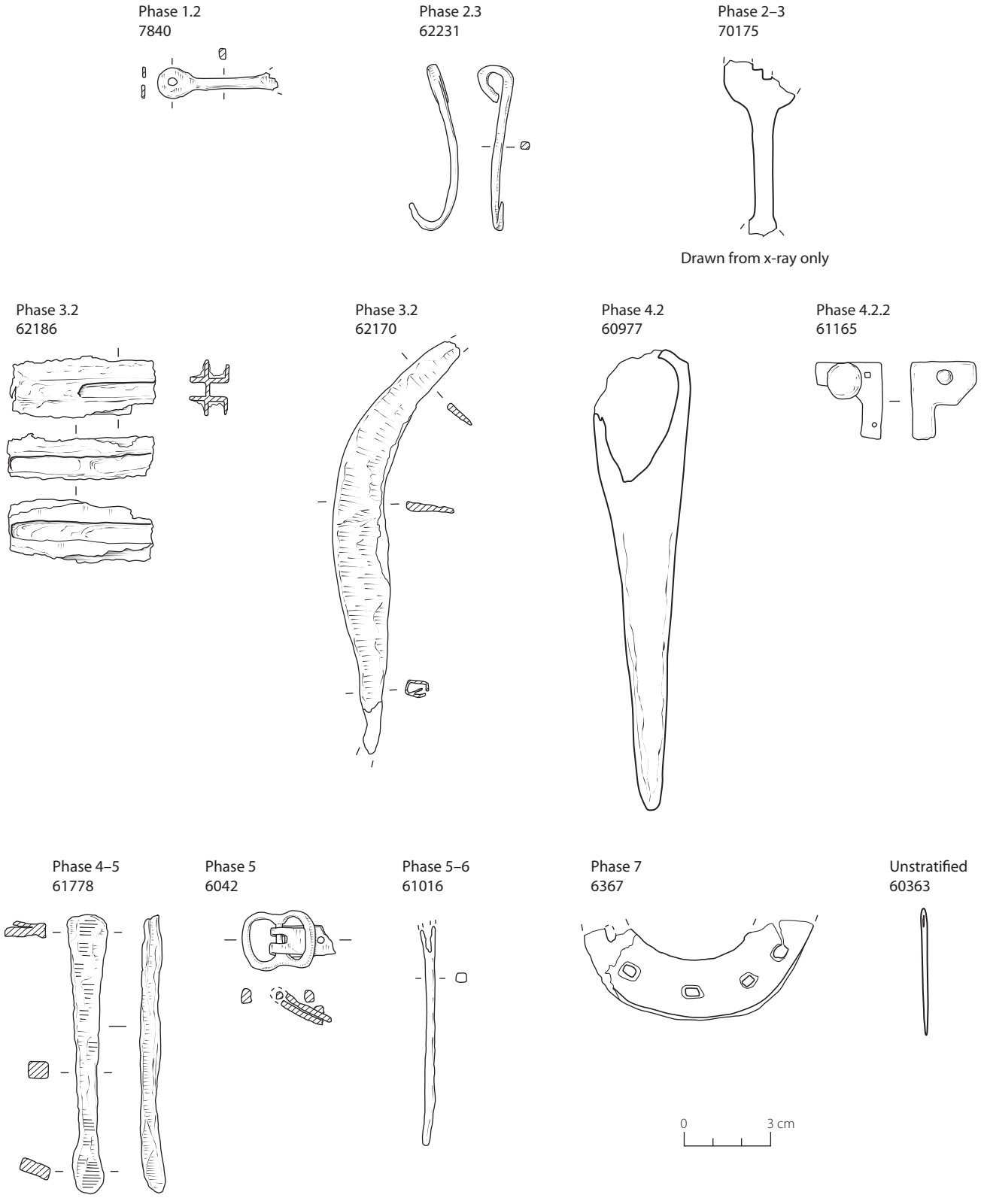

Figure 14.1. *A selection of the 530 iron finds from Quoygrew. (Image: Lesley Collett.)*

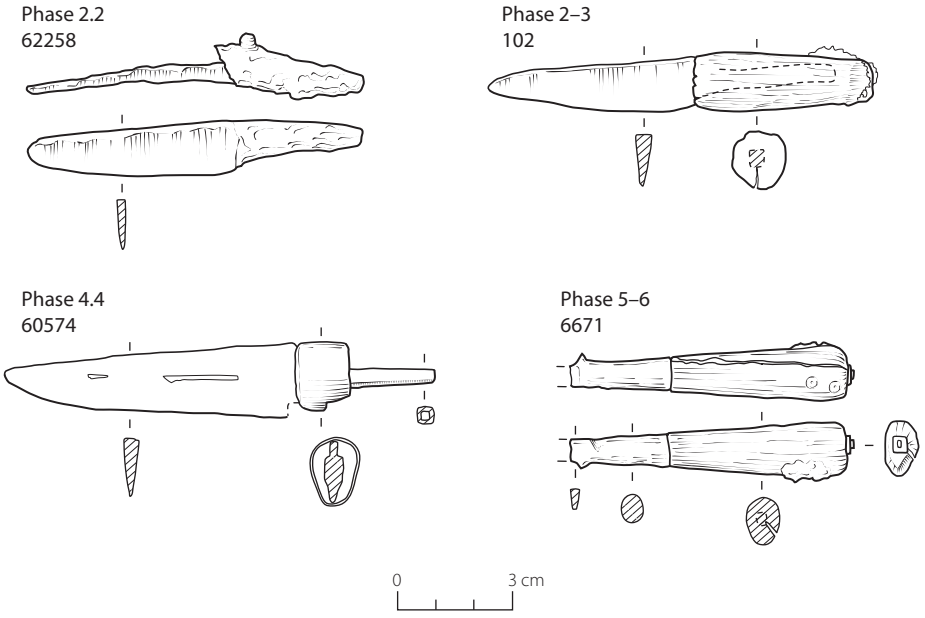

Figure 14.2. *A selection of the knife finds from Quoygrew. (Image: Lesley Collett.)*

Coppergate, York, and also applied to medieval knives from several sites across York (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2751–5). This typology was based primarily on the form of the blade back, and identified five groups, termed Forms A–E. Applying this typology to the Quoygrew knives, two of the five forms have been recognized: these are Type C (where the blade has a straight back close to the shoulder, or end of the tang, and is convexly curved towards the blade tip), and Type D (where the back of the blade is wholly curved). Two knives (Sf. 62258, from Phase 2.2 of House 5, and Sf. 60574, from Phase 4.4 of Room 1) are of Form C. Find 62258 is largely complete, and retains traces on its tang of an organic handle, probably of bone. Find 60574 has an iron hilt band at the join of the blade and tang.

Three knives are of Form D (Sfs. 62132, 7969 and 102). Find 62132, from Phase 2.3 of House 5, has traces of a possible bone handle. The other two knives of this form were found in middens. Find 102 is virtually complete with the remains of a hardwood wooden handle (see below), and was found in the Phase 2 to 3 Fish Midden on the cliff. The less well-preserved Sf. 7969 was retrieved from Phase 2 to 3 of the Farm Mound midden.

Five whittle tang knives which cannot be typed were also identified, the earliest in date being Sf. 70115, which was found in Phase 1.2 of the Farm Mound midden. Find 70094 came from Phase 2 to 3 of the Farm Mound midden. Two knives are composed of several fragments. Find 60708 may be part of the same knife as Sf. 60678, both fragments being recovered from the same Phase 4.3 to 4.4 floor layer in Room 1. Finds 61569, 61825 and 61944 were all retrieved from the same Phase 4 midden fill in Room 4, and may similarly be parts of one knife. Finally, Sf. 60328 was found in a Phase 4.3.1 midden in Room 2.

Find 6671, from a Phase 5 to 6 layer south of Room 2, is of a post-medieval whittle tang form incorporating a bolster between the blade and tang. It also has a non-ferrous metal — possibly gold — end cap, and the remains of a bone handle with ring-and-dot decoration. The use of a bolster was an innovation of the mid-sixteenth century, which was in widespread use by the seventeenth century (Goodall 1993, 130).

The remaining knives are all too fragmentary to enable identification of form. Find 62235 (Phase 2.2) and 62126 (Phase 2.3) both come from House 5 floor layers. Finds 7548 and 7550 could be fragments of the same knife — both were found in the same Phase 2 to 3 Farm Mound midden layer. Find 61959 was recovered from a Phase 3 fill south of Room 3.

The two knife forms, C and D, represented at Quoygrew correspond to those recovered most frequently from both Anglo-Scandinavian and medieval deposits at Coppergate (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2753). Batey and Freeman (1996, 141, illus. 114, no. 193) note a whittle tang knife of similar shape from excavations at the Beachview Studio Site in Birsay, Orkney, and others from Freswick Links in Caithness (Batey 1987, 124–5, 5.3, fig. 27F).

Ottaway noted in his study of the Coppergate knives that form was unlikely to be the most significant element in any assessment of a knife's particular function, and that dimensions were probably more important (Ottaway 1992, 559). However, few of the Quoygrew knives survive in anything close to a complete state, and even where they appear complete, their original size may have been altered by wear. Measurements have been taken from the five whittle tang knives that were typed. These had blade lengths which ranged from 50 mm (Sf. 102) to 78 mm (Sf. 60574), and follow a similar pattern to the knives from Anglo-Scandinavian Coppergate where 89% of the measurable blades were of lengths between 45–85 mm (Ottaway 1992, 574). None of the complete or fragmentary knives from Quoygrew approaches the size of the largest Coppergate examples, nine of which had blade lengths in excess of 100 mm (Ottaway 1992, 575, fig. 237). In contrast, measurements of the ratio of blade width to blade length produce a different pattern to that found at Coppergate. At Quoygrew, three of the five knives had a blade length to width ratio of 3.5:1 or less, whereas at Coppergate, 81% of the knives had a blade length to width ratio of between 3.5:1 and 6.5:1. This may be an accident of survival, but could point to a different range of uses.

14.2.7. Knife handles

Two of the Quoygrew knives (Sfs. 102 and 60708) retain substantial wood-handle remains. That on Sf. 102, from Phase 2 to 3 of the Fish Midden, is a hardwood such as ash, willow, alder or hazel (potentially local raw material) (Fig. 14.2). That on Sf. 60708, from Phases 4.3 to 4.4 of Room 1, is oak (probably an import given the unlikelihood of finding oak, which has a high specific gravity, as driftwood). Three knives found in House 6 at Jarlshof (*c.* eleventh to thirteenth century) were also identified as having oak handles (Hamilton 1956, 183). Mineralized remains on Sf. 60574, from Phase 4.4 of Room 1, also indicate the possible use of wood for the handle of this knife. Bone and antler were also used to make handles. Find 6671, the post-medieval whittle tang knife discussed above, retains a decorated handle of bone (Fig. 14.2). Traces of osseous material on Sfs. 62258 (Phase 2.2 of House 5) and 62132 (Phase 2.3 of House 5) suggest that these knives also had bone or antler handles.

14.2.8. Other cutlery

Find 60650 from a Phase 5 to 6 fill of Room 1 is the decorative scale tang handle from a piece of cutlery, probably a knife (Fig. 14.3). Unfortunately, nothing survives beyond the lower end of the handle to indicate whether it belonged originally to a knife or fork.

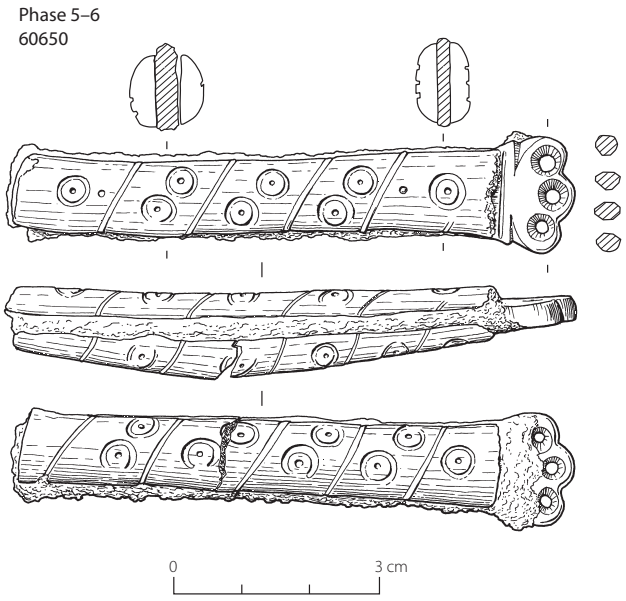

Figure 14.3. *The decorative handle of a post-medieval knife or fork from Quoygrew. (Image: Lesley Collett.)*

The handle is formed from a pair of osseous plates decorated with inscribed ring-and-dot and inset with a zigzag pattern of copper-alloy wire, and with a lobed copper-alloy terminal. Two copper-alloy rivets attach the plates to the scale tang. Another bone scale tang handle (Sf. 6001.2) and the remains of a three-tined fork (Sf. 6227) were both found in Phase 7 topsoil over Room 1, and might be two halves of the same piece of cutlery. Three tined forks became popular during the second half of the eighteenth century (Noël Hume 1978, 180).

14.2.9. Nails

Nails make up the single largest category of iron finds from the site, comprising 157 records (Table 14.1). Apart from a small group of five similar nails or studs discussed below, they are unremarkable. Nails were found in many types of contexts from all phases. Fifty-five came from Phase 6 to 7 contexts, particularly from the Phase 6 garden dug into the Area G Farm Mound. Many nails were also found in Phase 4 contexts of House 1, especially in Rooms 1 and 2. Presumably they secured structural timbers and internal fittings. Their abundance may relate to the decay and collapse of the building at the end of its use-life (large numbers being from Phases 4.5 and 5). Nails were not common finds in House 5, perhaps implying that this building was dismantled more carefully than House 1. This interpretation is strengthened by the observation that there were also few nails found in Phase 3 of House 1.

A smaller number of nails (19) came from Phases 2 to 3, almost all of which (15) were recovered from the Farm Mound midden of Area G rather than the contemporary Fish Midden at the shore. The Farm Mound finds may result from old structural timbers being discarded or (more likely) burnt for fuel (cf. Hamilton 1956, 116). This spatial patterning in the nail finds underscores the functional difference between the Farm Mound and Fish Midden previously inferred based on soil micromorphology (Simpson *et al.* 2005). The few nails from Phase 1 of the Farm Mound may also have derived from discarded or burned timbers.

14.2.10. Nails or studs

Five similar small nails or studs were recovered (Sfs. 61454, 61518, 61732, 61881 and 61895). All have flat sub-circular heads, the diameters ranging from 15 mm (Sf. 61895) to 17.5 mm (Sfs. 61518 and 61881), and their lengths range from 21.5 mm (Sf. 61732) to 28 mm (Sf. 61881). Three of the studs were found in Phase 4 midden fills associated with Room 3 (Sfs. 61881 and 61895) or Room 4 (Sf. 61518), and the other two (Sfs. 61454 and 61732) were found in Phase 7 (topsoil) deposits west of Room 3. It is not clear what particular function these nails or studs served, but it seems very likely that all five were originally used together, presumably in Room 3.

14.2.11. Clench bolts and roves

Eight clench bolts and ten roves were identified. Clench bolts were used to join overlapping timbers, and comprised a nail with a flattish head which, having been hammered through the timbers to be joined, then had a perforated plate or rove set over the tip. The bolt tip was usually hammered flat over the rove, which could be square, diamond-shaped or sometimes sub-rectangular (Ottaway 1992, 615).

Only three of the clench bolts appear complete (Sfs. 60524, 60594 and 60801), and their overall lengths range from 30 mm (Sf. 60524) to 33mm (Sf. 60594). All three are from Phase 4.2.1 of Room 2.

Six clench bolts still retain roves, or fragments of roves (Sfs. 7603, 7972, 60316, 60469, 60594 and 60801). All the forms of rove noted above are represented amongst the unattached roves, the most commonly found shapes being square (ten examples) and rectangular (four examples): only one diamond-shaped rove was identified. The roves range in length from 17 mm (Sf. 62377) to 31.5 mm (Sf. 70287). The clench bolts and roves all fit into the range of sizes noted at Coppergate (Ottaway 1992, 615–16).

The earliest levels in which clench bolts and roves were recovered date to the Phase 2 to 3 Farm Mound middens (Sfs. 7972 and 70287), but the majority (nine examples) were retrieved from Phase 4 levels, with six being in contexts associated with Room 2. Five bolts and roves were found in Phase 4 to Phase 6 deposits.

Clench bolts were used in the construction of clinker-built boats and ships. They have been found in association with a number of excavated boats, such as the ninth- to tenth-century boat burials at Balladoole and Knoc y Doonee, both on the Isle of Man (Bersu & Wilson 1966, 13, 91–2), and that at Kiloran Bay, on Colonsay, off the west coast of Scotland (Bill 2005, 348–57). However, these bolts were also used on buildings, on elements such as doors, shutters and hatches, and well-covers (Goodall 1987, 181–2), as well as on carts (Ottaway 1992, 618). Given the coastal nature of Quoygrew, the clench bolts and roves found on the site could derive from boats, possibly in re-used timbers. However, use as structural fittings on dwellings at the site is equally plausible.

14.2.12. Tacks and rivets

Find 60349 (from Phase 4.3.1 of Room 2) is a tack. It might have been used on a box or casket, perhaps for attaching an edging strip (Ottaway 1992, 613). Rivet Sf. 70286, from Phases 2 to 3 of the Farm Mound midden, has become detached from its original setting. It may have been from a small iron fitting such as a buckle-plate or small hinge, although none were recovered in the excavations. Alternatively, it may be from an antler or bone comb (see Chapter 13).

14.2.13. Staples

Sf. 60959 is a fragmentary looped staple found in a Phase 4.1 floor layer in Room 2. Looped staples were used with hasps which secured the lids of chests, or to attach drop handles on boxes or chests (Ottaway 1992, 623, 643). Wood remains in the corrosion could derive from the chest to which it was originally attached.

The other staples recovered from the site are 'U'-shaped. Finds 7121 and 60828 were both recovered from Phase 7 topsoil deposits, and could be of recent date. The fragmentary Sf. 60430 was found in Phase 5 to 6 paving south of Room 1.

14.2.14. Possible hinge pivot

Find 6483, from Phase 4 to 5 fill in Room 1, may be the remnant of a hinge pivot, originally 'L'-shaped, and probably used for hanging a door or a shutter. One arm — the shank — would have been driven into a frame or wall, and the other — guide arm — would have been attached to a hinge strap.

14.2.15. Wall hook

Possibly of recent date, Sf. 70313 was found in a Phase 6 level in Area G. It appears to be a wall hook.

14.2.16. Mounts
Mounts made from strips with decorative terminals could be attached to small pieces of furniture such as caskets, and were more commonly made of non-ferrous metals than of iron (Goodall 1990a, 787). Two iron fittings of this type found at Quoygrew have traces of white metal plating, perhaps to give the appearance of more valuable material. Find 7840 from Phase 1.2 of the Farm Mound has a perforated flattened sub-oval terminal at one end, and probably had the same at the other, which is now incomplete (Fig. 14.1). Both ends of the much larger Sf. 70175, from Phases 2 to 3 of the Farm Mound, are incomplete, but the remains indicate a fitting similarly shaped to Sf. 7840 (Fig. 14.1). Sf. 61231, from Phase 4.2.1 of Room 2, is not plated, but is similar in size and form to Sf. 7840. It may be residual in floor-levelling material. Similar iron fittings were recovered from Anglo-Scandinavian levels at Coppergate (Ottaway 1992, 628–9), and from a twelfth-century level at Laugharne Castle, south Wales (Rogers unpublished data), while copper-alloy mounts of the same form have been found particularly in twelfth- and thirteenth-century deposits, for example in Norwich (Margeson 1993, 75).

14.2.17. Fittings
Miscellaneous fittings include the 'L'-shaped Sf. 61165, from Phase 4.2.2 of Room 2 (Fig. 14.1). It has a large nail with traces of plating on the head *in situ* on the broader arm, and a series of smaller perforations along the other arm. Find 61996, from a Phase 2 dump north of Room 5, may originally have been socketed, but both ends now appear broken. There are several nails still *in situ* on the fitting, all with mineralized wood attached.

14.2.18. Ferrule
Find 60977 is a large ferrule, which was found in a Phase 4.2 floor layer in Room 1 (Fig. 14.1). With their form unchanged from the Roman through to the medieval periods, ferrules were attached to the bases of wooden staffs or poles for protection against wear (Manning 1985, 141; Goodall 1984, 97). Although found in an unambiguously medieval context, at 156 mm in length, Sf. 60977 is particularly comparable to several large ferrules found in Late Saxon deposits at Thetford (Goodall 1984, 97, fig. 135).

14.2.19. Lock bolt from mounted lock
Recovered from the Phase 6 garden in Area G, Sf. 7435 is a substantial lock bolt, probably from a door.

14.2.20. Buckle
The only iron personal accessory recovered was a buckle, Sf. 6042, found in a Phase 4 to 5 demolition deposit (Fig. 14.1). It is a double-looped buckle, lacking its pin, and with part of a buckle plate for attachment to a belt. The buckle was originally plated with a non-ferrous metal. Double-looped buckles were more typically made of copper alloy, or sometimes of lead alloy (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2894–5), so Sf. 6042 was probably made in imitation of such buckles. The plating would also have offered protection from rusting (Goodall 1990b, 526). Double-looped buckles first appear during the fourteenth century but the form continued in use into the post-medieval period (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2895; Margeson 1993, 28).

14.2.21. Horse harness buckle
Find 61229, from Phase 4.2.1 in Room 2, is part of a buckle which had a revolving arm. It would have been used on horse harness, as the rotating arm would have reduced chafing from straps (Goodall 1990b, 526). The form is typically medieval, current from the eleventh to thirteenth centuries (Ottaway & Rogers 2002, 2894), so Sf. 61229 appears to be residual (perhaps in floor levelling deposits) in its Phase 4 deposit.

14.2.22. Horseshoes
Five horseshoes were found on the site, all coming from Phase 6 (Sf. 7582) or Phase 7 deposits (Sfs. 6367, 60419, 70267 and 70280). All but one are post-medieval or modern in form. Find 6367, however, is a residual medieval object (Fig. 14.1). It has countersunk nail holes and a smooth outer edge, typical of the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries (Clark 1995, 87, 96).

14.2.23. Perforated strips
Seven finds of perforated iron strip, some with nails *in situ*, were recovered. It is difficult to determine their original functions, but the larger strips such as Sf. 7371 (from the Phase 6 garden in Area G) may be fragments of hinge strap from doors or shutters, while smaller perforated strips such as Sf. 70146 (from Phase 2 to 3 of the Farm Mound) may have been parts of chest fittings or straps. Overall, the finds came from deposits ranging from Phase 1.2 (Sf. 70179) to Phase 7 (Sf. 7506).

14.2.24. Sheet fragments
Sheet fragments, some with nails or nail holes, were also found. Their original functions are unknown. Six fragments came from levels of medieval date, with 15 coming from post-medieval deposits and topsoil.

14.2.25. Unidentified objects
Several objects or fragments of objects that were recovered are of uncertain function. Sf. 7970 is a slightly curved strip or rod, and was found in Phases 2 to 3

of the Farm Mound midden. Find 62186, which was found in Phase 3.2 of Room 3, comprises six channels of rectangular section, set next to each other in a sub-circular arrangement, with copper-alloy brazing or plating all over (Fig. 14.1). Find 60631, from Phase 7 topsoil, is incomplete, and comprises a socket which at one end fits into a second socket, the whole being covered in non-ferrous plating or brazing.

14.3. Copper alloy

The copper-alloy assemblage from Quoygrew is small, comprising only 33 finds (excluding coins, which are considered below) (Table 14.2). Sixteen of these are fragments of sheet metal — probably parts of vessels — which have a common distribution on northern Scottish sites, such as Freswick Links in Caithness, dating from the twelfth century onwards (Batey 1987, 145–6), although earlier vessels (perhaps with more specialized functions) are known from Viking Age burials (e.g. Speed & Walton Rogers 2004; Stylegar 2007, 97–8). At Quoygrew, virtually all of this material is attributed to Phases 2 to 4. Such vessels needed regular repair in the form of patching, and their raw material can also be recycled. Both processes could have resulted in the small pieces, with and without evidence of riveting, found at the site.

Of the remaining part of the assemblage (17 finds, excluding copper-alloy coins), the variety of objects is greater. Two small discs with central perforations from Phase 2 to 3 contexts (Sf. 3002 from the Fish Midden and Sf. 60837 from north of Room 1) may have served as decorative mounts. Find 3002 was particularly well stratified and is dished in shape. A third perforated disc, Sf. 7253 from Phase 6 in Area G, is less well stratified and more ambiguous in function. It could simply be a modern washer. There are two simple wire-headed pins from poorly stratified contexts (Sf. 60358 which is unphased and Sf. 60598 from Phase 7) over Rooms 2 and 3 respectively. They are likely to derive from the late or post-medieval occupation of the settlement. The tiny shaft from a pin of unknown form (Sf. 61636) was also found in a Phase 3.3 context of Room 1. Given its small size this object may be intrusive.

Other copper-alloy finds include a belt slide of sheet metal (Sf. 7983 from Phases 2 to 3 of the Farm Mound) and two possible pipe-stem pieces (Sfs. 4293 and 4298 from Phase 4 to 5 middens near the cliff edge west of Room 3). The remaining copper-alloy finds include a possible comb rivet (Sf. 6387 from a Phase 2 to 3 context north of Room 1), a small ring with a circular cross section (Sf. 6228) found in the topsoil, a hook (Sf. 6063, probably from Phase 5) and a number of unidentified fragments (Sfs. 7434, 60652, 61050, 61654 and 62380).

14.4. Lead

Find 60936 is a corroded spindle whorl from a Phase 4.2 floor of Room 1. A similar find was recorded from the Brough of Birsay, Orkney (Curle 1982, ill. 53, nos. 504–6), from an earlier date, and the type has also been discussed in relation to examples from Freswick Links, Caithness, where a number of Scandinavian parallels are cited (Batey 1987, 136–7). Find 70185 is a piece of rolled lead which may have served as a fishing weight. Its mass is only 10.4 g, however, so it is unlikely to have been part of the equipment for hand-line fishing for large cod and related species from boats. It might, however, have served a more expedient purpose when catching small fish from the coast.

Table 14.2. *Copper-alloy and lead finds from Quoygrew by phase.*

Find	Phase									Unphased	Total
	2	2–3	3	3–4	4	4–5	5–6	6	7		
Copper alloy											
Belt slider?		1									**1**
Comb rivet?		1									**1**
Hook						1					**1**
Copper pin			1						1	1	**3**
Copper sheet	1	2	2	2	7	1			1		**16**
Mount		1									**1**
Object			3				1	1			**5**
Pipe-stem fragment?						2					**2**
Ring									1		**1**
Washer or mount		1						1			**2**
Lead											
Lead spindle whorl					1						**1**
Lead weight		1									**1**
Total	**1**	**7**	**6**	**2**	**8**	**4**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**1**	**35**

14.5. Coins

The disparate group of five coins from Quoygrew consists of small change denominations ranging in date from *c.* 1500 to 1891. James IV second issue pennies (Sf. 6634, of two coins together, dated 1500–10) are very common finds elsewhere in Scotland, and would have continued to circulate, one assumes, for approximately half a century. James V issued no pennies, and those of Mary are rare. The James IV coins would therefore not have been superseded as small change until the issuing of the lions/hardheads (1 1/2 pence) of Mary during the period 1555–60. Charles I third issue turners (Sf. 60506, dating to 1642–50) also circulated widely and for a very long time, including after the Union of the Parliaments in 1707 and the theoretical demonetization of pre-Union Scottish coins. Small change was never supplied to Scotland in sufficient quantities in the eighteenth century, so turners, bodles and bawbees were still circulating unofficially. Duits from the Netherlands (Sf. 60396, dated 1616–22) circulated in large numbers in Scotland in the seventeenth century and probably later. Their similar size and general configuration to turners made them acceptable as substitutes for them. The Victorian 6d (Sf. 70487, dated 1891) could have remained in circulation well into the twentieth century. None of these coins are tightly stratified, four being from the disturbed upper strata of the site and one (Sf. 60506) being a stray find.

14.6. Discussion

Collectively, the iron finds allow one to imagine a rural settlement of diverse economic activities, moderate wealth and wide-ranging networks of communication and/or exchange. In Phases 2 and 3, both the fish hook and the knives are consistent with the importance of fish processing implied by the zooarchaeological evidence (Chapter 7). The clench bolts and roves could all be from wooden elements of buildings, but it is more likely that many of them also relate to the maritime economy — being essential for the construction of clinker-built boats. The medieval horse equipment, like the small numbers of horse bones recovered from several phases (Chapter 8), indicates the presence of animals essential for land-based transportation. The find of a possible sickle from early in Phase 3 is consistent with the archaeobotanical evidence for cereal cultivation (Chapter 10). Craft activities, including woodworking, metalworking and sewing, are also indicated — albeit from the later phases of occupation.

The iron objects of medieval date imply only moderate wealth, but some aspiration to display. The decorative mounts with white metal plating (to imitate more valuable material) from Phases 1 to 3 are the best examples. The form of these objects can be paralleled in both urban centres such as Anglo-Scandinavian York (Ottaway 1992, 628–9) and a castle in Wales (Rogers unpublished data). Clearly the medieval inhabitants of Quoygrew had access to contemporary fashion when it came to emulating the fittings of cosmopolitan and wealthy contemporaries. It is not possible to suggest where these specific objects were produced, but at least information was travelling freely along the maritime networks into which the islanders were linked. A similar story of long-range connections, but without the intention to display, is evident from the knife with an oak handle. Even the most essential and utilitarian items could come from afar — although this example is later than the plated iron mounts, being from Phase 4.

The iron is also informative regarding the structural sequence. The paucity of nails from House 5, compared with the latest use and abandonment phases of House 1, may indicate that its timbers were dismantled for reuse rather than left to decay *in situ*. The finds also imply internal fittings and furnishings — like the possible hinge pivot (from a door or shutter) in Room 1 and the looped staple (probably from a chest) in Room 2.

Being fewer in number, the copper-alloy and lead finds are less informative. Both metals could have been worked locally (e.g. Hamilton 1956, 159–60). It is likely, however, that the copper-alloy sheet from vessels represents imported objects — potentially from Germany (Bigelow 1984, 214–15; 1989, 188) or Dublin (Wallace 1987, 203). It may also be relevant that the site lacks decorative copper-alloy dress fittings — like strap ends and ringed pins — known from other late Viking Age and early medieval settlements in Atlantic Scotland (e.g. Batey 1987, 108, 117, 137; Owen 1993, 327; Smith 2007a, 437; Gerrard *et al.* 2010, 13). This absence helps corroborate the interpretation that it was a settlement of modest wealth.

There are also no Viking Age or early medieval coins from Quoygrew. Moreover, the five late medieval and modern examples are of diverse dates and low denominations. Arguing from negative evidence is always problematic, but it may be appropriate to assume that most on-site economic transactions involved commodities rather than currency (cf. Skre 2011).